



SO WHAT ABOUT SEWING

A COMPLETE GUIDE

Volume 1

Large Type Edition

THE CATHOLIC GUILD
Services for the Visually Impaired
67 West Division Street
Chicago, Ill 60610

HV1658
B812
Vol. I



15 WEST 16th STREET
NEW YORK, N. Y., 10011

SO WHAT ABOUT SEWING

By: Adele Brown

Edited and published by:

THE CATHOLIC GUILD

Services for the Visually Impaired

67 West Division Street

Chicago, Illinois 60610

1977?

HV/658

B812

Vol. I

Copy 600

For information please contact
Mrs. Marie Porter
Catholic Guild for the Blind
67 West Division Street
Chicago, Illinois 60610

SO WHAT ABOUT SEWING

General Contents

<u>VOLUME 1</u>	Page
INTRODUCTION.....	16
WHERE TO GO FROM HERE.....	19
SEWING WORDS AND MEANINGS.....	22
PART 1 - A STITCH IN TIME	
Basic Hand Sewing.....	44
To Make a Knot.....	46
Sewing by Hand.....	47
Facts about Sewing.....	49
STITCHCRAFT.....	55
Basting.....	55
The Running Stitch.....	56
Practice Suggestions.....	57
Overcasting.....	58

PART 1 - STITCHCRAFT (cont.)

The Back Stitch.....	59
The Slipstitch.....	61
The Hemming or Whipping Stitch.....	62
Marking and Folding Hems....	64
Hemming Hints.....	67
Curved Hems.....	68

PART 2 - GETTING IT ALL TOGETHER

SUGGESTIONS FOR EQUIPMENT.....	72
List of Equipment.....	73
The Sewing Machine.....	76
PERSONALIZING YOUR MACHINE....	80
Setting the Seam Guide.....	81
THREADING THE MACHINE.....	83

PART 2 (Cont.)

CONTROLLING YOUR SEWING MACHINE	90
To Regulate Stitch Length....	97
To Regulate Tension.....	99
PRACTICE SUGGESTIONS.....	100
CUTTING.....	104
Cutting Strip.....	107
PINNING.....	109
TO SEW A FINE SEAM.....	111
The Plain Seam.....	111
Finishes for Plain Seam.....	113
Edge-Stitching.....	113
Overcasting a Hem.....	114
Bias Tape.....	115
Steps for Applying Bias Tape.	116
Flat Felled Seam.....	117
French Seam.....	118

PART 2 (Cont.)

RIPPING.....	119
CHOOSING YOUR PROJECT.....	121
MAKING AND MARKING THE PATTERNS	123
PATTERN MARKINGS.....	125
DIRECTIONS FOR MAKING THE BASIC PATTERN OF MUSLIN.....	130
SHOPPING FOR MATERIALS.....	133

VOLUME 2

PART 3 - PROJECT SEW.....	138
WORKING WITH THE BASIC PATTERN.	140
GENERAL STEPS FOR MAKING YOUR GARMENT.....	146
PINNING THE PATTERN TO YOUR FABRIC.....	149

PART 3 (Cont.)

CUTTING OUT YOUR GARMENT	152
TRANSFERRING MARKINGS FROM THE PATTERN TO FABRIC	155
THE ART OF PIN BASTING	162
THE ART OF BASTING	168
USING MASKING TAPE FOR A GUIDE LINE	168
PINNING THE DART FOR SEWING	169
SEWING DARTS	171
STAYSTITCHING	173
FACINGS	174
ASSEMBLING THE NECKLINE FACINGS	176
ALL-IN-ONE FACING	178
FACING A NECK WITH A LAPPED OPENING	182

PART 3 (Cont.)

FACING FACTS.....	184
INTERFACING.....	187
A BASIC SKIRT.....	190
EASY WAISTBAND FOR SKIRTS OR PANTS.....	191
MAKING A DRESS WITH A WAISTLINE	192
MAKING PANTS.....	194
CONSTRUCTION PRESSING.....	197
A GUIDE FOR PRESSING	200

PART 4 - DETAILS, DETAILS, DETAILS

THE FINISHED LOOK.....	204
PLACKET FINISHES.....	209

PART 4 (Cont.)

ZIPPER APPLICATIONS.....	212
Single Lap Zipper.....	212
Centered Zipper.....	214
Invisible Zipper.....	217
BUTTONS.....	221
Covered Buttons.....	224
BUTTONHOLES.....	226
ALTERNATIVES TO BUTTONHOLES....	231
Button Loops.....	231
Fabric Loops.....	232
Self-Filled Tubing.....	233
Corded Loops.....	234
Attaching Loops.....	235
Thread Loops.....	239
Button Snap Combinations.....	240
Velcro Fastening.....	240

PART 4 (Cont.)

SNAP FASTENERS.....	242
To Sew a Snapper to the Garment.....	244
HOOK AND EYES.....	245
SLEEVES.....	248
Flat Method of Setting in Sleeves.....	253
CUFFS.....	255
Wrist Band Cuff.....	256
Elasticized Lower Edge Finish For Sleeves.....	257
Mock Cuffs.....	258
Bias Tape Cuffs.....	258
CHANGING A NECKLINE.....	260
COLLARS.....	265

VOLUME 3

PART 4 (Cont.)

YOKES.....	272
Making a Yoke Pattern.....	272
BELTS.....	275
Covered Belts.....	276
Assembling the Belt.....	280
Making a Soft Belt.....	282
Corded Belts.....	284
Tie Ribbon Belts.....	286
BELT CARRIERS OF SELF-FABRIC...	288
BELT CARRIERS OF THREAD.....	289
BELT BUCKLES.....	293
POCKETS.....	298
To Make and Place Patch	
Pockets.....	298
Side Seam Pockets.....	301

PART 4 (Cont.)

EASING.....	304
TUCKS.....	306
GATHERING.....	310
Gathering by Machine.....	310
Gathering by Hand.....	312
PLEATED SKIRT.....	314
LININGS.....	318
Jacket Lining.....	318
Dress and Skirt Lining.....	321
Flip Lining.....	323
TRIMS AND FINISHES.....	326
Trims.....	326
Binding.....	327
Making Bias Strips for	
Binding and Facing.....	329

PART 5 (Cont.)

PILE FABRICS.....	383
DEEP PILE OR FUR-LIKE FABRICS..	386

PART 6

SEWING FOR YOUR HOME

AND COMMUNITY.....	392
PILLOW COVERS.....	393
SIMPLE CURTAINS.....	394
DRAW DRAPES WITH PLEATER TAPE..	397
HANDY HAND-WIPERS.....	401
CIRCLE TOWEL.....	405

INTRODUCTION

Adele Brown can do it—so can you! And sew you can and will if you use the suggestions and helps set out in this book of instructions. Mrs. Brown, a blind homemaker, in developing her own techniques, has put together a method of sewing that works for her and has worked for many of her students over the past twenty years.

(Mrs. Brown sought and received help and encouragement from her friend, Mrs. J. Lyle Daws, whose knowledge of sewing and understanding of the problems Mrs. Brown was dealing with, made this book of instructions possible.)

You can learn to sew and turn out a good-looking outfit, or repair older garments. Although this method is geared toward blind people who have done little or no sewing, it is, we feel, readily adaptable for those visually limited persons who have once enjoyed sewing, or would like to become involved with a new venture. As you progress you will develop your own techniques--everyone who sews is constantly on the lookout for new ideas, new patterns, new materials, new approaches to old problems. We do not guarantee that you will become a famous fashion designer, or one of the top ten best-dressed women; we do

methods of solving problems that will arise once you begin to work out the instructions. Then we will come to the finishing touches that will personalize, or vary your creation. A dictionary of common terms used in sewing will be contained in the back of the book. An insert of drawings will, we hope, help make clear some of the word descriptions.

You will need help with pattern-making from some sighted person who can follow your instructions, or, preferably, knows some things about sewing, to take measurements and cut basic patterns from muslin. More and more people are becoming inter-

ested in sewing and, if you show an interest and ask their help and advice, you will find a ready audience, anxious to exchange ideas. Sewing can become addictive, but it is a practical, as well as creative, pastime wherein you are only limited by your own ingenuity.

Mrs. Marie Porter,
Project Co-ordinator
Catholic Guild for the Blind
67 West Division Street
Chicago, Illinois 60610

SEWING WORDS AND MEANINGS

-A-

ARROWHEAD - a decorative embroidered triangle used to reinforce the ends of seams, pleats, or pockets.

-B-

BACKING - lightweight fabric used as reinforcement.

BALANCE WHEEL - sewing machine part; large wheel at right moves the needle up and down.

BASTE - to sew temporarily by hand or by machine.

BELTING - a stiff, ribbon-like banding used at the waistline of a skirt or dress, or as stiffening for a fabric belt.

BIAS - diagonal grain line formed when the lengthwise thread is folded parallel to the crosswise thread. True bias has the most stretch and elasticity.

BINDING - a single or double fold of fabric encasing a raw edge as a finish or a trim.

BOBBIN - sewing machine part, spool for thread placed in lower part of machine.

BOBBIN CASE - sewing machine part; holds the bobbin spool.

BOBBIN WINDER - sewing machine part, usually on the right near the balance wheel used to wind the bobbin spool thread from a regular spool.

BODKIN - a blunt needle used for threading ribbon, elastic, or tape through casing or beading.

BODICE - the blouse or upper part of a dress.

BONDING - the joining of two layers of fabric together permanently.

-C-

CAM - part of the buttonhole attachment for the sewing machine; resembles a metal slot used to determine the size of the buttonhole.

CARRIER - a thread or fabric loop used as support for a belt or a tie.

CASING - a hem, facing, or binding used to hold a drawstring, boning, or an elastic.

CLIP - to cut into the seam allowance

from edge to seam line. You clip a seam so the outer edges will spread to fit another section of the garment, or so a curved seam will lie flat when turned. Or you "clip" into a corner of a squared neckline or facing, so the seam can be turned.

CREASE - a folded line pressed into the material.

CUTTING STRIP - straight edge used for cutting a straight line.

-D-

DART - a tuck, tapered at one or both ends, taken to fit fabric to the curve areas of the figure.

DRAPE - fullness controlled in soft folds by means of gathers, tucks, or pleats.

DROPPED SHOULDER - shoulder line located below the normal line.

-E-

EASE - to fit together seams of unequal lengths so excess fabric does not appear to pleat or pucker.

EASE ALLOWANCE - fullness included in the pattern to relieve strain and to aid in fitting a garment.

EDGE STITCH - a line of stitching placed close to any folded edge.

EDGING - narrow lace, ruffling, etc., used as trimming.

EYELET - a small, worked hole or metal ring used for decoration, lacing, or for prong of buckle.

-F-

FACE - to finish an edge by applying a fitted piece of same or other fabric.

FEED DOGS - sewing machine part;
located under the needle - function
is to keep fabric moving.

FELLED SEAM - adds strength and decoration to sporty garments showing two rows of stitching on outside of garment.

FLAP - a shaped piece that hangs loose and is attached by only one edge, as the flap of a pocket.

FLAT METHOD - method of sewing garments together doing as many steps as possible before joining side seams.

FOLD - to turn under, making a piece of material double itself along a given line.

FOLD OF FABRIC or FABRIC FOLD - in most pattern layouts, fabric is folded with

the right side inside. Thus two sections of the garment can be cut at one time, such as two bodice fronts; or a section such as a bodice back which is wanted in one piece can be laid on the fold so the entire piece is cut in one operation.

FRENCH SEAM - a seam within a seam.

FUSING - the blending of fibers to form a web and holding this web together with an adhesive.

-G-

GATHER - to control fullness by drawing up thread.

GORE - a shaped, tapered section of skirt, dress, or coat, wider at the lower edge.

GRADING - trimming seam allowances of

facing, interfacing, and garment in varying degrees to eliminate bulk.

GRAIN - the lengthwise and crosswise threads of a fabric.

LENGTHWISE GRAIN - the threads that run up and down the fabric length.

CROSSWISE GRAIN - the threads that run across the fabric between the selvages or the lengthwise edges.

ON GRAIN - a fabric is "on grain" when lengthwise and crosswise threads cross each other at perfect right angles.

OFF GRAIN - a fabric is "off grain" when lengthwise and crosswise threads cross each other on a slant.

WITH THE GRAIN - the direction in which the fabric grain runs. When

fabric is cut on a curved or a slant (bias), you cut "with the grain"; you stitch "with the grain"; you press "with the grain".

AGAINST THE GRAIN - in a direction opposite to that in which the fabric grain runs.

-H-

HEADING - the very top of a hanging drape. Part of the pleat or scallop.

HAND FINISHING - the detailed touches done by hand.

HEMLINE - the line on which a hem is folded back.

-I-

INSERTION - a narrow band of lace or embroidery with plain edges so it can be set into fabric for trimming.

INSET - a piece of fabric or trimming inserted for fit or for decorative purposes.

INTERFACING - the material used between the garment and the facing to give added strength, shape, or stiffness, and to prevent stretching.

INTERLINING - a layer of fabric placed between the lining and the garment for extra warmth.

-L-

LAP - the part of the garment that extends over another; also to fold one section over another.

LAPEL - a part of the garment that turns back or folds over, especially on a coat or jacket.

LAYER - to trim seam allowances in

different widths to reduce the bulk and give a flatter, smoother look.

LAYOUT - pattern pieces arranged on fabric ready for cutting. The instruction sheet indicates various layouts according to pattern size, width, and nap of fabric.

LINING - a fabric covering, finishing the inside surface of a garment or a section of a garment.

-M-

MARK or MARKING as used in sewing means the transfer of construction symbols from the pattern to the wrong side of the garment sections, except pockets, buttonholes, etc.

MITER (MITRE) - the diagonal seam at the corner of a hem or a straight band.

-N-

NAP - the terms "WITH NAP" or "WITHOUT NAP" as used in patterns refer to fabrics such as corduroy, velveteen, wool, broadcloth, satin and twill, and to fabrics with a one-way design. These require a special cutting layout with all pattern pieces laid so their tops point in the same direction.

NEEDLE BOARD - used in pressing velvets and velveteens.

NOTCH - a small, V-shaped mark on the seam edges of pattern pieces. Used as a symbol for matching seams.

NOTIONS - essential dressmaking supplies required to make a garment: matching thread, binding, tape, zipper, trimming details.

-O-

OVERCAST - to use a slanting stitch to finish the raw edges of fabric that ravel easily.

-P-

PIECING - the joining necessary when narrow widths of fabrics are used.

PILE - weave of a fabric having upright surface threads such as velvet or velveteen.

PIN BASTING - pinning seams or darts before stitching.

PINKING - notched finish for a raw edge.

PLACKET - an opening in a garment for ease in dressing.

PLAIN SEAM - the most commonly used of all seams and the basis for many other types of seams, it is usually made

five-eighths inch wide, and is stitched with a regulation machine stitch.

PLEAT - a fold of fabric - may be made in various ways.

PRESSER BAR LIFTER - sewing machine part; long shaft toward the back that holds the presser foot.

PRESSER FOOT - sewing machine part; located just above the feed dogs under which the fabric is drawn.

-Q-

QUILTING - hand or machine stitching to form a design. Made through several thicknesses of material.

-R-

RAVEL - to pull or draw threads from the edge of a piece of fabric forming a fringe.

RIP - to open a row of stitches, such as a seam.

ROLLED HEM - narrow hem rolled between thumb and forefinger, and secured by slip stitches.

RUFFLE - strip of fabric pleated or gathered and used as a finish or trimming.

-S-

SAG - degree to which garment stretches after hanging.

SEAM - the line formed by sewing together parts of a garment or edges of fabric.

SEAM ALLOWANCE - extra fabric allowed on pattern beyond seam line. A seam allowance of five-eighths inch has been allowed on most patterns, except tapered

seams on darts, gussets, and inserts.

SEAM BINDING - ribbon-like tape used to finish edges.

SEAM GUIDE - guide for keeping sewing seams straight.

SELF FABRIC - the same fabric used in the garment.

SELVAGE - the narrow, woven border on the lengthwise edges of woven fabrics.

SHIRR - to make three or more rows of gathers.

SHRINK - to contract woven fabrics by application of heat and moisture.

SIZING - finishing process applied to fabrics and yarns to give stiffness and strength.

SLASH - to cut open. A curved dart is "slashed" open through the fold edge

after stitching so it will lie flat.

SLEEVEBOARD - small, well-padded board for pressing sleeves and sleeve caps.

SLIP STITCHING - an invisible hand sewing for finishing hems or facings, and for joining edges of an opening.

SMOCKING - decorative embroidery stitching to hold fullness in regular patterns

SNIP - to cut with one short stroke.

STAY STITCH - line of regular-length machine stitching made in seam allowance one-eighth inch inside seam line to prevent bias and curved edges from stretching.

STITCH REGULATOR - regulates the length of the stitches.

-T-

TACK - to fasten together loosely two fabric surfaces with small stitches.

TAILOR'S TACKS - temporary basting stitches made through two thicknesses of fabric and then cut apart. Used to mark pattern symbols.

TEMPLATE - part of the buttonhole attachment for the sewing machine; resembles a metal slot used to determine the size of the buttonhole.

TENSION - the relationship of the needle thread to the bobbin thread as it pertains to the amount of pull on each.

TENSION SPRING - sewing machine part; controls tautness of the thread.

TENSION REGULATOR - sewing machine part; regulates the tension of the thread.

THREAD CUTTER - sewing machine part;

usually attached to the presser bar used to cut threads.

THREAD GUIDE - sewing machine part; they vary in style and its purpose is to guide the thread from the spool to the needle with proper tension.

THROAT PLATE - sewing machine part; metal plate under the needle and contains a hole which needle goes through after going through the fabric to pick up bobbin thread.

TOPSTITCHING - a line of stitching on the outside of the garment that is functional and/or decorative.

TRIM - to cut away excess fabric.

TUCK - a fold of fabric stitched in place.

-U-

UNDERLAP - the part of a garment which laps or extends under another part.

UNDERLAY - a piece of material placed under other pieces to effect joining as in a slot seam.

UNDERSTITCHING - a row of stitching placed near the seam of a faced edge to hold the facing in place.

-V- to -Y-

VENT - a finished opening.

WELT - applied strip of fabric used to strengthen a slash or a seam, or used for decorative trim.

WHIP - to sew edges together with a light overhand stitch.

YOKE - a piece added in bodice construction to allow fullness.

PART 1

A STITCH IN TIME

PART 1 - A STITCH IN TIME

Basic Hand Sewing

Hand sewing is basic to whatever sewing you undertake. It is necessary both in temporary stitching, as in basting, or in finishing touches, as in hems and facings. Practicing hand sewing is not interesting, but it is rewarding, allowing you to make neat, even stitches that will add to the good appearance of whatever you are sewing.

Locate the eye of the needle by placing the needle in the left hand. Hold it near the middle, with the ends pointing straight up and down. With your right hand touch one end

very lightly as you twist the needle around and around between your fingers. The eye is a hole and will feel slightly larger than the rest of the needle.

Use a wire loop needle threader. Place the needle in a pin cushion so that the eye is up. Hold the needle threader in the right hand. Hold it between the thumb and index finger so that the point of the wire extends just beyond the fingers and the metal part nearly touches the palm of your hand. Push the wire through the eye of the needle.

Now thread the wire loop with the thread as though it were a large eye. Withdraw needle threader, pulling

thread through the eye of the needle as you do so.

New sewers should try needles as large as tapestry needles and then smaller darning needles working down to a size eight. Practice threading needles until you are comfortable doing it before going on to the next step.

To Make a Knot

A knot is used in sewing to keep the thread from coming completely through the material when you begin to sew.

To make this knot, wind the end of the thread around the index finger of your right hand until it completely

encircles the finger. Place the index and thumb together and roll the thread between them. This brings the thread off the finger. Draw the thread roll toward the end as far as possible. You should now have a knot.

Sewing by Hand

A thread should be no longer than arm's length. If the thread is too long, it can become difficult to manage. We suggest a thread of 20 to 30 inches long. The thread should always be cut from a spool. You might find it helpful to put your thread around your neck to keep it from tangling while you are threading, knotting, or cutting the desired length. You may

want to eliminate the knot in favor of a tiny back stitch. If you use a knot, it should be obscured from view.

Wear a thimble on the middle finger of your right hand. It will save you many finger pricks, and give you added pressure when you need it in stitching through several layers of material. Hold the needle between the thumb and index finger usually near the center of the needle so that the end near the eye of the needle touches the side of the thimble near the tip.

In drawing the needle through many thicknesses you may push against the thimble. The first stitch should be taken close to the edge of the material. Sewing usually proceeds from

right to left. Left-handed people will work in opposite directions. Embroidery stitches and catch stitches are made from left to right.

Sewing should be held in both hands. One hand holds the material and the other guides the needle. Whenever possible, keep your sewing on the table. If it is necessary to hold it, place the bulk of the material in your lap.

Facts About Sewing

Needles come in a range of sizes from number one (the heaviest) to number twelve (the finest). The size you choose will depend upon the work you are doing. For general hand

sewing size six to nine is used. Some persons who do a great variety of sewing prefer to buy needles in packages of assorted sizes, but there are several disadvantages in such packages. Every time a new needle is taken from an assorted package, you have to look carefully to choose one of the proper size, and you may not be able to recognize the number you wish. Only a few in such a package are the correct size for frequent use, and so you would be tempted to use needles too large or too small or to buy a new package after using only a few needles from the old package.

Self-threading needles are available and easy to use. They may be

purchased at notion counters and from The American Foundation for the Blind. There is an opening in the eye of the needle that allows you to slip the thread into the eye by holding the thread taut and bringing the needle eye up to it.

For basting, a long needle is best; for fine work, a short needle does the job better. Milliners' needles are a long variety; crewels have an extra long eye, making threading easier; sharps are all-purpose, round-eyed needles of medium length. An emery cushion helps to keep track of your needles and also keeps them sharp and polished for greater ease in passing through the fabric. There

is a kind of pin cushion that can be put on your wrist which you may find helpful since needles and pins have a way of getting scattered and a pin cushion gets knocked about in the flurry of maneuvering bulky material. Pins are needed by large quantities. You will be using them for many things--for pinning your patterns to the fabrics before cutting, in pin basting, in markings of many kinds.

Thread also comes in various sizes, the higher numbers being the lighter in weight, the lower numbers, the heavier. For general sewing you will be using about a fifty or sixty. Mercerized thread is preferable. (Mercerized thread, a strong, cotton

thread which holds dyes well and resists shrinkage.) Polyester thread is usually used with knits and synthetic materials.

Most sewing is done with a single thread. A double thread is used in places where there is likely to be strain--like for buttons, snaps, hooks, etc.

Keep on hand a small assortment of thread, including black and white, and identify them with tape or on marked pegs so that you will use the right color for what you are sewing. Small plastic bags are handy to hold thread, bobbin with thread, and a label reminding you of the color. Keep the thread you will be using

with the fabric it matches, so that you will be sure of the match. Thread is usually purchased at the same time you are choosing your fabric.

Thread, buttons, bias tape, zippers and notions come in various colors and shades and should always be matched as closely as possible. Snaps, hooks and eyes, come in black or silver and also in a variety of sizes. Use the smallest snaps, etc., on the delicate fabrics and the larger ones on the heavy materials.

There are many shapes and sizes of buttons. Be sure your buttons are suitable and fit the buttonholes of your garment. If you are replacing a button, the garment may look better

if all buttons match. It may be wise to replace all the buttons if you have lost one or two of them.

STITCHCRAFT

Basting

Basting is a temporary stitch. It is used to hold two thicknesses of material together, until a permanent stitching is made. Use a knot at the beginning and sew two small stitches to secure it at the finishing point, so they can be easily removed. Basting should always be straight. The size of the stitches and the space between them appear to be the same, usually about one-fourth to one-half inch in length.

It is difficult to rip and to distinguish basting stitches, which are temporary, from the permanent stitches. Pin basting is a substitute and has been used successfully. It requires much pinning but dispenses with ripping out basting stitches with the danger of taking out the wrong stitches.

The Running Stitch

The running stitch is a permanent stitch. It looks like tiny even basting stitches. It is used for gathering, shirring, mending, quilting, and for seams and tucks. This stitch may be made more quickly and easily if the needle is worked or weaved in and

out through the material several times before it is drawn through completely. You may strengthen your running stitches with a back stitch. This is done by going forward for several stitches and then back for one stitch. The running stitch like the basting stitch should always be straight. You will find it easier to take small stitches by using a fine needle.

Practice Suggestions:

It may seem to you like a waste of time to practice hand stitching, but once you get started making a garment, you will realize how important it is to make neat, even, unobtrusive stitches. It makes all the difference

in how your finished product will look. If you are a very beginning beginner, we suggest you start out sewing with a large needle and heavy duty thread, working on muslin or scrap material. In this way you will be able to examine your own stitches to determine whether or not they are evenly spaced.

Overcasting

Overcasting is one way to finish the raw edges of plain seams and to prevent raveling. To make this stitch, draw the knot up from the underneath side. Start at the lefthand edge and work to the right. The needle is pointed toward the left shoulder and

the thread is placed over the edge of the material. The stitches should be the same distance apart and the same in size as they are from the edge of the material.

In order to gain a clearer picture of this method, the beginner may be helped by using a practice card. This card has holes punched in it an even distance apart and the same distance from the edge. Lace the thread through these holes to give a clearer picture of how the stitch is made.

The Back Stitch

The back stitch is used where strength is required and it can be used to replace machine stitching

when no machine is available. The top side of the back stitch looks very much like an even running stitch while the underneath side looks like a chain stitch.

Work from right to left. Make your first stitch one-eighth inch long. Insert the point of the needle back at the start of the first stitch and bring point of needle out one-eighth inch to the left of where the thread came out of the fabric. Reinsert the needle at the end of the stitch and continue in the manner described. In other words, take one stitch, go half way back into that stitch and make another full stitch. In repeating this action you will be doubling back

into your stitching, making a continuous, strong stitch.

Use your thumb to guide your needle as this will keep your stitching in a straight line.

The Slip Stitch

The slip stitch is used when an inconspicuous stitch is needed to hold a folded edge in place. The thread is hidden in the fold. Hold the fabric so that the folded edge—the edge to be sewed down—is toward you and lying horizontally in front of you. Work from right to left. Fasten your thread by coming through the fold, concealing the knot. Opposite the place where the needle comes out of

the fold, take a tiny stitch in the fabric beneath the fold and parallel to the fold, picking up about a single thread. Run the needle back into the fold, opposite the stitch, and slip it along inside the fold about a quarter inch. Bring the needle out of the fold and pick up another tiny stitch in the fabric underneath the fold. This stitch is used in hemming, in applying facing, where there is no strain.

The Hemming or Whipping Stitch

The whipping stitch is used for making hems and will be one of your most commonly used stitches. Hemming is a method of finishing the raw edges

of garments.

This stitch is sewed along the folded edge of the garment and holds the fold in place.

To whip a hem, insert the needle on the underneath side of garment so that the knot remains invisible under the fold of material. Work from left to right. Pick up about one thread of garment at the point along the edge of fold. Slant your needle toward your left shoulder. Draw thread through the material and catch just a little folded material. Move your needle about one-fourth of an inch along the fold. Pick up just about one thread of the garment and then a few threads of the fold. Continue

this process until you reach the end of the hem. The stitching should be almost invisible on the right side of the garment while small slanting stitches are seen on the wrong side.

Practice with large needles and heavy thread until you can make a neat, even stitch. To make tiny, inconspicuous stitches use fine needles and thread.

Marking and Folding Hems

There are several methods of marking hems. If the garment is not hanging straight, the best method is to have someone help you by using a skirt hem marker or a yard stick. The marker or yard stick should be placed so that

the skirt is hanging directly down, free from the body. Do not pull the skirt material outward or push it inward, but be sure it is hanging straight down from the body. Place pins at the same level distance from the floor.

If the garment hangs straight on you, measure an even distance up from the bottom or raw edge and place pins along this line. This may be done by using a tape measure, ruler, or a hem gauge. The hem gauge is obtainable from notion counters; it has an adjustable pointer. Set pointer at desired number of inches, place on garment with pointer resting on the bottom edge of garment. Place pin

along the zero edge of metal ruler. Move along until you have line of pins an even distance from bottom and turn material on this line toward the inside of garment. It is wise to place basting stitches along this edge as they will hold the hemline crease better until you have whipped the hem in place. After you have turned the material on the hemline crease you will notice you have a raw edge to the inside of your skirt. Turn this edge under one-fourth of an inch. Measure very carefully so your fold will be even. This gives you a neat folded edge to whip to the garment.

Hemming Hints

Another method of marking hems is to match garment to be hemmed up against a similar garment which is already at a length which is right for you. Use pins or masking tape to indicate the proper length for your new garment. Be sure to match seams which you are folding. When hemming knits or heavy materials, the first fold of the material will not be necessary since it makes a bulkiness that leaves an impression in the right side of the material that is not desirable. Pinking the raw edges, using a pinking shears, or sewing on seam binding will conceal the raw edge. If you will examine the construction of garments

available commercially, you will see that very often the first fold is not used. You will need to know the material with which you are working, and be conscious of the appearance you want to achieve with it, to know how best to finish a hem.

The first fold of a hem should measure about one-fourth of an inch. The second fold about two inches. Bulky materials eliminate the first fold; instead use stay-stitching, zig zag, or seam binding on the raw edge.

Curved Hems

Some full skirts have a curved hemline. When you turn this under you will have more material in the hem

than you have on the garment at that point.

This extra fullness can be taken in by pleating the material or you may ease it in by little gathers. Try to keep the hem even in width. If you prefer the gathers, run a row of gathering stitches one-fourth inch from the raw edge; pull thread until the hem fits garment. Turn raw edge under toward inside and whip.

PART 2

GETTING IT ALL TOGETHER

GETTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Suggestions for Equipment

In order to do a good job, you will need to gather together some basic equipment and plan to arrange it in an organized way so that you will not have to go hunting for things every time you sit down to sew. A sewing cabinet, a chest of drawers, a file cabinet, some definite place where you will have room to store all the things you need in your sewing project. When organizing equipment, use plastic bags to keep the fabric and its matching thread, buttons, or other notions together in one container so that you will have the right colors readily accessible.

List of Equipment

Assortment of needles

Needle threaders

Thimble

Pins, straight pins (lots of them)

Safety pins, small and large

Pin cushion (the kind that fits
on the wrist is handy)

Ripper

Scissors

Pinking shears

Thread - black, white, and colors
to match fabric

Muslin (for making patterns)

Hem gauge

Ruler and measuring tape with
Braille markings

A small magnet for finding dropped
pins

It is handy to keep pins in small containers that are shallow and have tight lids. Since you will be using lots of pins, you will want them easily and quickly available when you reach for them and yet you will not want them scattered all over during the process of handling fabrics and moving things as you work.

Straight pins with large round heads are easy to find and pull out when you are following pins to keep a straight line for darts, patch pockets, etc.

Plastic clothespins—the type that clip on—can be used to hold a hem in place while you are sewing it by hand. This will shorten the pinning job.

When working, keep tools together

in a box for easy accessibility so that you will not lose time and temper hunting for scissors, ripper, needle threaders, needle for threading your machine, pin cushion and pins, sewing gauge.

Your ironing board serves other purposes besides ironing. It is a good height for you to work at. Use it when pinning a zipper in place, when measuring and pinning a hemline, when cutting off excess fabric after measuring and pinning. Keep it ready for construction pressing whenever you are working at sewing so that you will automatically go to it for pressing at each step in putting your garment together.

The Sewing Machine

If there is a sewing machine in your home which is available to you, check it over to see whether it will serve you by using a few adaptations. There is no reason why you cannot use many machines on the market without special safety features added. By using a seam guide, guiding tape, marked measuring devices you can learn to sew a straight seam. If the dials click into position or has bars that point like the dials on an oven, then it is possible to become familiar with the machine's construction and performance. Of course, the newer machines are more versatile, but many people are using machines that are

twenty years old and still in good working order.

If you are in the market to buy a sewing machine, it would be to your advantage to give it much thought and time. This is an expensive item and you will need to take into consideration how much you want to spend and what you expect of your machine. Look for reputable brands that are readily serviceable. Investigate the models in the stores and ask to try them. Look for features that will help you identify the stitch sizes, the zigzag stitching. Examine the threading procedure. A good portable machine may be simpler to operate than an expensive, super deluxe model, and

much more economical. Viking has a model that has specially marked dials and some instructions in Braille. It would be advisable, also, to request lessons in the use of the machine you have decided to purchase. They should be made available to you as they are to any customer.

My experience in purchasing my first sewing machine: I asked the salesman if I could be given the lessons that ordinarily accompany the machine. On thinking it over, I asked if I could take the lessons first and then decide on whether or not I would purchase the machine. The salesman agreed.

When purchasing a new machine, look

for one that has a buttonhole attachment, rather than the type where you set up your own buttonholes with dials which depend upon eyesight to determine the size and shape of the buttonhole. If you already have a machine that does not have the buttonhole attachment, it is possible to purchase an attachment to fit your machine. The buttonholer you buy will depend upon whether your machine has a long or short shank for the presserfoot. If you do not know this, take one of your presserfeet to the dealer and he can select one for you. Select the type that uses cams. (Cams determine the size of the buttonholes without having to set dials.)

PERSONALIZING YOUR MACHINE

A seam guide is used to keep the machine stitching in a straight line. It is screwed to the machine and has a slot to make it adjustable to any seam allowance width. Seam guides come with most sewing machines. However, if none is available for your machine, you can purchase one. Some seam guides are made of magnetic material and just adhere to the machine. The seam guide is set to the width of seam allowance that is needed. The seam allowance is the difference between the edge of material and the seam line of stitching. It varies in width but most garments are stitched with $5/8$ inch seam allowance.

Setting Seam Guide

To set the seam guide a simple device can be made either of heavy material that will give you a stiff edge, such as rug binding, belting, felt, or of cardboard. If you use material, place a straight pin on the stitching line. This guide is placed under the presser foot so that the pin comes right between the two prongs of the presser foot. Bring your seam guide to this stiff edge and tighten the screw. If you use cardboard, use a piece about the size of a three by five index card, cut grooves at each corner so that the cardboard can be placed up against the needle with the needle fitting into the groove. Mark

the four corners where you have measured to make your grooves, five-eighths, three-fourths, one-half, and one-fourth — the measurements most frequently used in sewing seams. When you have completed your cardboard seam-guide setter, you will be able to turn to the corner you need, set the needle into the notch, bring the seam guide up to the edge and tighten it in place at the proper point for sewing. (Sample seam guide setter in INSERT.)

Another help in indicating seam line is to use tape. Adhesive tape one-half inch wide will do very well. Run it vertically from the five-eighths inch mark on the machine,

with the right side of the tape lined up with the mark on the machine.

Another piece of tape, running horizontally just behind the presser foot will give you a good guide for beginning stitching on your fabric. Bring the presser foot down to hold the material in place and check again to make sure it is properly placed to allow you to sew a straight seam.

THREADING THE MACHINE

There are many different makes and models of machines and the threading procedure varies. Refer to the instruction manual that accompanies your machine to check how it is threaded. Careful study of the manual

will provide you with many answers: therefore, it is recommended you get your manual into some readable form—either in Braille, large print or on tape.

It is difficult to pass thread through a small hole, but you will find it much easier if you thread a needle and pass the needle through the holes bringing the thread along after it. To thread the sewing machine needle, use a wire needle threader in the same way you use one to thread a needle for hand sewing. It is handy to insert the needle threader through the eye of the sewing machine needle so that when you have passed the sewing needle through

the necessary threading points for your machine, it will be in position for you to run the sewing needle through. When your thread has passed through the needle threader, remove the sewing needle, and pull the needle threader out of the eye of the machine needle. It will take some practice and experimentation for you to learn the mechanics of operating your machine, and it can be frustrating. It is necessary to learn to do it yourself, because it is impossible to get very far without dealing with it yourself. As a beginner, you will be heavy-handed and break thread, make snarls in the thread, the machine will become unthreaded, etc. You will need

to make many adjustments and, therefore, must learn how your machine operates, how it is threaded, how the bobbin is threaded.

If you have a sewing machine with a needle that has the eye facing forward, you will find it impossible to use the needle threader in the standard way. The presser foot is too close to the needle. However, if you take a needle threader and bend it into a right angle, bending the metal tab as close to the wire as you can, you will be able to thread this needle. It will take practice, but it is not impossible. For these front facing sewing machine needles, many people prefer self threading sewing

machine needles which are quite satisfactory, if you remember to pull your fabric back and then to the left. If the fabric is pulled forward when you are taking it out of the machine, you will unthread the needle.

The Upper Part — In threading the upper part of almost any machine, there are just four main devices to use—spool pin, tension spring, take-up bar, and needle. Memorize those four names in that order, and then notice how they represent the steps in threading. The other places to thread are called thread guides.

The Lower Part — In threading the lower part of most machines, the bobbin, which holds the lower thread,

drops into a bobbin case or a shuttle, and the thread comes out of it through a tension spring. You can learn from your teacher or from the manual just how to wind the bobbin and thread the lower part of the machine. If you memorize the words bobbin, shuttle, and tension in that order, they will help you to remember how to thread the bobbin. Practice this threading until you can do it rapidly before going on to the next step.

Completing the Threading — To finish the threading, the lower thread must be brought up through the hole just beneath the needle, and both threads must be pushed back under the presser foot. Follow these directions

carefully so that you can complete the threading easily and safely.

1. Hold the end of the upper thread in your left hand. Keep the thread slack, not taut, between your hand and the needle.
2. Turn the balance wheel slowly by hand or press the knee lever gently until the needle passes to its lowest point and then to its highest point, and until the take-up bar is at its highest point.
3. Pull the upper thread until it brings up a loop of the lower thread.
4. Lay both ends back under the presser foot, making sure that the upper

thread passes down between the two toes of the presser foot.

Whenever you begin to sew check to see that these threads lay back under the presser foot.

A large percentage of service calls on sewing machines are due to improper threading of the sewing machines.

CONTROLLING YOUR SEWING MACHINE

The secret of good sewing lies in controlling your machine so that it will do exactly what you want it to do. You must be able to start stitching at a given point, stitch a perfect straight line, stop at a given

point, turn perfect corners and be able to stitch close to a folded edge (as on a pocket). There are no alternatives to proper control of a sewing machine.

In order to gain this control you must learn the names of the parts of the machine and how each part functions. Have the sewing machine booklet that comes with your sewing machine put into large print, Braille, or tape recorded according to your preference.

Study this booklet until you know how to thread your machine, wind a bobbin, including how to prepare your machine for sewing. This information can vary according to the make and model.

A general list of parts would include balance wheel, thread guides, tension spring, tension regulator, take up lever, presser bar lifter, thread cutter, needle, needle clamp, presser foot, throat plate, feed dogs, bobbin shuttle, bobbin winder, bobbin case and stitch regulator.

Good posture is a must for comfort. Sit directly in front of your sewing machine so that your right knee can easily press against the foot lever, or so that your right foot can press against the foot lever, depending upon the type machine you are using.

Check to see that your take up lever is in its highest position. This is very important since this is

the beginning and ending of each stitch. To start sewing your machine must be at this point, otherwise the motor will labor or it will jump, cause knots or cause the needle to become unthreaded.

You have a choice of two methods to practice controlling your machine. You may use fabric with your machine threaded, or you may eliminate the thread and use paper. However, if fabric is used the feed dogs will grip the material and you will receive a slightly different touch than you would receive if you used paper.

Place the material beneath the presser foot and turn the balance wheel to bring the point of the needle

into cloth or paper, then lower the presser foot. This will determine the point where the stitching will begin. Raise the take up lever to the highest point — press the controller pedal (this may be either foot or knee) to start the machine. The speed depends upon the amount of pressure on the controller pedal. Many cotton materials require only slight guiding for the best sewing results as the feed dogs grip the fabric and feed it into the machine. This is done by placing the index finger of your right hand on the seam guide to keep the edge of fabric flush to the edge of seam guide. Place your left hand lightly on the

material and a little to the left of the presser foot. Some of the other materials which require light pressure often require additional support in the form of holding your material slightly taut. To give this additional support press down slightly with your left hand with your thumb slightly before the presser foot and your index finger behind the presser foot making this area a little taut. Do not pull the material when sewing - let the feed dogs control the fabric.

To stop the machine take the pressure off the control and check to see that the take-up lever is in the highest point. Then raise the presser foot and draw the threads back. Clip threads.

To turn a corner bring the needle down into fabric and pivot on the eye of needle, raise the presser foot and turn the work as desired then lower presser foot and resume stitching.

In assembling a garment you may have certain areas that require top-stitching. For these areas a different type of guiding becomes necessary. We have found that if you place straight pins on the line you wish to stitch, you can guide from pin to pin but you must remove the pin before the head enters under the presser foot. Sewing over the head of straight pins may break the feed dogs and may become expensive to repair.

For top stitching you must have

good control of your machine and be able to run it very slowly and stop every few inches to check.

When sewing a long seam start with your material in your lap. This lessens the pull on the needle. If the material is very heavy, make sure you have a surface prepared to catch it as it comes from the end of the needle. By distributing the bulk of the material you will not be putting too much strain on the needle and feed dogs.

To Regulate Stitch Length

Twelve to fifteen stitches per inch of stitching is a desirable stitch length for most purposes when medium-weight fabrics are used.

Longer stitches are used for coarse or heavy fabrics, machine basting or gathering, and other purposes. Shorter stitches are best suited to thin or lightweight fabrics. Stitches that are too short for the weight of a fabric may pucker it or even cut it. If ripping is necessary, short stitches are hard to remove. Stitches that are too long make weak, unattractive seams. Observing various stitch lengths in several fabrics of different weights and examining some well-stitched garments will help you learn to recognize suitable stitch lengths.

To adjust stitch length, find the stitch regulator on your machine. You may study a sewing-machine manual

to help you locate it and find out how to adjust it.

To Regulate Tension

Tension means tightness. When the tensions on the upper and lower threads are equally tight, stitches look about the same on both sides and lie flat without puckering. The stitches are locked inside the fabric. This is good tension or properly adjusted tension. A top tension which is too loose lets the top thread form loops on the underside and the lower thread lie straight. A top tension which is too tight lets the top thread lie straight.

Your sewing-machine manual describes the upper tension and tells

how to regulate it. Usually the lower tension is left alone, for it seldom needs changing and it is difficult to manage.

PRACTICE SUGGESTIONS

Before you take on a sewing project, practice sewing on scrap material to build some skill in handling the machine and sewing straight. Set your seam guide at five-eighths inch and sew two layers of material together, making sure that the right sides of the material are together. Right sides together is a term you will be seeing often—it is a simple concept, but if you do not remember to do it, you will make many costly

mistakes, resulting in much ripping. Practice sewing on different shapes such as circles or collars cut from scrap material.

Check to see that your machine threads lay back under the presser foot. Place fabric under the raised presser foot with the seam edge on the right and the bulk of the fabric to the left. Enough of the fabric should lie on the machine so that it will feed evenly without dragging. Turn the hand wheel to lower the needle into the fabric about one-half inch in from the beginning of the stitching line. Backstitch almost to the end of the fabric and then slowly stitch forward at an even speed.

Carefully lower the presser foot on the fabric to hold it in place. Keep the index finger of your right hand flat on the table of the machine up against the sewing guide. Use your left hand to guide the fabric. When sewing your left hand will guide the bulk of the material as it feeds under the needle. The right hand index finger will check the edge to keep it straight with the seam guide. If you are working on a small piece of fabric, hold the lower left edge between your thumb and fingers, thumb underneath.

Threads need to be fastened at the beginning and end of stitching. Stitches may be fastened by tying

threads at the end of a stitching line or by retracing stitching. Tying is difficult to do, since it requires pulling a loop of thread through so that both ends of thread will be on the same side in order to tie a knot. This is like ripping out half a stitch. Retracing a few stitches by reversing the machine, stitching back a few stitches and forward again to the end of the stitching line, is an easier way to fasten threads. Become acquainted with the way to reverse stitch on your machine by consulting the manual. Be sure to stitch exactly on the top of the previous stitching to avoid bulkiness.

CUTTING

A pair of good quality dressmaker shears is a necessity to accurate cutting. They must be kept sharp. Use them only for cutting fabric. It is probably more advantageous to purchase shears with short blades because they will allow you to keep closer to your work as you are cutting. You will have better control of what you are doing. Practice cutting out shapes, following an edge and using your left hand to trace out the cutting edge which your shears will follow with your right hand. Your fingers will be moving just ahead of the scissors. Make clean, even cuts, allowing the shears to ride along with

the bottom, flat blade resting on the table as you cut. Do not pick your material up in your hands, but rather cut it while it is laying flat on the table. It may be helpful to rest a finger of your left hand on the top blade to guide it in cutting.

Bias tape makes a good, strong cutting edge for patterns. It is durable and resists very well the onslaught of an unruly shears.

Line your shears up with the bias tape edge on the left side and the material to be cut underneath the pattern and extending out to the right. The part you will cut away will be on the right side. For persons who are lefthanded, there are lefthanded

shears that can be purchased, and cutting will be done in reverse fashion with the pattern on the right and the material to be cut away on the left of the shears. When you have finished cutting out a pattern it should be exactly the shape of the pattern from which you are cutting. Slanting the shears inward makes it smaller; slanting outwards makes your piece larger than the pattern.

Practice cutting until you have a perfect edge; it will make fitting pieces together easier and sewing more accurate.

Do not completely close the shears between cuts, except when cutting to an exact point.

As you cut, walk around the table instead of pulling the fabric to you.

A pinking shears, which as serrated blades, is used to cut raw edges so that they will not fray or unravel. These shears should not be used to cut out the pattern pieces. They are much too unwieldy for such close work. A small embroidery scissors is handy for close work, for snipping threads, and for buttonholes.

Cutting Strip

A straight edge is a necessary device for cutting a straight line—a problem which often arises when you are working on a project. Straightening out a piece of fabric, a hemline, cutting an all-in-one facing,

and making bias strips, etc. The straight edge should be long enough to be practical (about a yard long would be convenient); and it should be flexible enough so that you can pin it to the fabric you wish to cut. A muslin strip, bound with bias tape, works very well. This can be your belt pattern, or a strip especially for the purpose of cutting. A plastic tape measure serves as a very adequate cutting strip. Felt, cut so that the edges are sharp and not frayed, serves very well. A cutting strip can be used as follows: Measure and set pins in a row at the place where you wish to cut. Lay the cutting strip so that it touches

your row of pins. Pin strip in place and remove marking pins from fabric. Now cut along the edge of the strip. (Your ironing board serves as a handy place to pin and cut. It is at the right level for working and you can move your fabric around as you do when ironing.)

PINNING

In preparing to baste or stitch, you will need to pin before you do either. The purpose of pinning is to hold fabric edges in place. Accurate pinning makes basting and stitching easy and produces better results than would careless pinning.

Place your work flat on a table.

Lay the pieces together accurately, matching edges if they are to be matched, or placing pieces according to directions. Begin by pinning at both ends of a seam or other stitching line.

When using pins as guides, make sure that the heads are toward you and the points travel toward the center of the prongs of the presser foot. In this case, pins would be parallel to the stitching line, and would be used where the seam guide would not be a possibility, as when sewing darts and pockets. Pins serve as signals, also, for when to stop a stitching line. Pins with large, round heads are easier to find and

pull out quickly when the material is moving under the needle.

TO SEW A FINE SEAM

The Plain Seam

The plain seam is the most commonly used of all seams and the basis of many other types of seams. It is usually made five-eighths of an inch wide (some pattern companies recommend one-half or one-quarter) with a regulation machine stitch, about a medium length stitch as designated by the instructions for your particular sewing machine. All the pieces of your garment will be put together with this seam. To make the seam, place two pieces of material with their right

sides together. The right sides of your material should be marked with a small safety pin. Check your material before you start cutting it to be sure which is the right side. Pin the right sides of each piece you cut so that you will not join pieces together with the material facing the wrong way. The direction "right sides together" will be used frequently and means only that the right sides of your material will be on the inside as you work, the wrong side on top facing you and on the bottom against the table. Stitch five-eighths inch from the edge. The plain seam can be finished to hide the raw edges by pinking, overcasting, using a seam

binding, facing or lining, or edge stitching.

Finishes For Plain Seam

If you are going to line your garment, the seams will not have to be finished. The plain seam is finished to hide raw edges, to keep them from unravelling, to strengthen the seam, and to give a neat appearance to the wrong side of the garment where all the construction is visible.

Edge-Stitching

A popular way to finish seams is to edge-stitch around the pieces while they are flat. You must transfer all pattern markings first. In the case of darts they must be stitched before

going around the edge, as they are stitched to the edge. You use either straight or zigzag stitching. Zigzag is preferred if your machine does the zigzag stitch. When your garment is assembled your seams are already finished. Pinking is rather difficult for most visually impaired.

Overcasting A Seam

Seams can be finished by hand, using an overcast stitch working from right to left with slanted stitches going over and over the edge of the seam allowance, in the same way you would whip a hem. Do not pull the stitches tight or the fabric will draw up. If the seam allowances are pressed to one side, overcast the

seam allowances together. When the garment is underlined, you can catch the seam allowances to underlining with the stitches.

When using seam binding, encase the edge of each seam allowance with bias seam binding, and edge stitch so that both edges of seam binding are caught with the one row of machine stitching.

Bias Tape

Bias tape is used to bind the edges of a muslin pattern to make a firm cutting edge. The secret to applying bias tape lies in setting your seam guides. For the first stitching, set your seam guide flush with the presser foot. The second stitching requires setting the seam guide a very

slight distance away from the presser foot, so that the stitching will be on the edge. Be sure that the points of the pins do not extend over the edge of the bias tape. They will interfere with guiding your tape.

Steps For Applying Bias Tape

Step One: Open edge of single fold bias tape. Place on the wrong side of material, edges flush. Pin every inch with pins at right angles and points toward edge. Be sure pins do not extend over edge as this will throw off seam guide when stitching.

Step Two: Set seam guide flush to presser foot. Stitch close to the open edge. Do not stitch beyond the first fold.

Step Three: Turn tape. If first stitching is correct, it will fall into place. Press with hot iron. Set seam guide just slightly away from presser foot so stitching will come close to edge. Stitch.

Flat Felled Seam

This seam is used to reinforce sports clothes, for double faced fabrics or reversible garments. It is used a great deal in making slacks. To make it, put the wrong sides of the material together and make a plain seam. (It can be done with right sides together, depending upon which side you want the fell to appear.) Press seam open; then press seam allowance to one side. Trim the under

seam allowance to about one-eighth inch. Turn under the raw edge of top seam allowance, and pin or hand baste over the trimmed edge. Topstitch close to the fold. In other words, you have turned the large seam allowance over the small seam allowance. Press down.

French seam

French seam is a seam within a seam and is used on sheer fabrics. To make it, place two pieces of material with wrong sides together, stitch one-quarter inch from the edge. Trim seam allowance to about one-eighth inch. Turn material on the stitched edge so that the right sides

are together and the fold is exactly along the stitched line. Press. Stitch again, at about three-eighths inch from the seamline, enclosing the raw edges.

RIPPING

Ripping is the distasteful part of sewing, but necessary. The ripper has a long plastic handle and a metal strip that divides into two parts...a short end that is blunt and a long end that comes to a point. Be careful not to poke holes in the fabric with the ripper. With practice, ripping becomes easier. The important thing is to rip without damaging your project.

Slip the point under one stitch and it will cut the stitch. After a few stitches are cut, you may pull the seam apart and cut the threads which become longer between the two pieces of material. The idea is to find your stitches with the point and gently push the row of stitches between the two prongs of the ripper. Once you have cut a few stitches, ripping out the rest of the stitches will be easier. If the stitches are large and have a long end, it is possible to take only one thread, either the top or bobbin thread, and pull as in gathering and withdraw a long piece of thread or several stitches at a time. If a seam is crooked or a dart

comes out a little bit wrong, it is best to rip and do it over rather than take the chance of ruining the appearance of your garment when it is completed.

CHOOSING YOUR PROJECT

When you begin to sew, it is encouraging to see results. Therefore, in deciding what you want to sew for yourself, think in terms of something within your reach. Make simple aprons. Make a skirt that consists of two pieces of material, hemmed and with an elastic waistband. There are many beginners' patterns on the market that have few pieces and are easy to assemble. It would be a good idea

to purchase one of these -- a shift, a skirt, a jumper.

Now comes the part where you have to use a little diplomacy, a lot of patience, and perhaps some brute force in order to get your patterns made for you. If you have a friend or relative who sews, it would be easier for you to give that person directions in how to make your patterns for you. However, since this is a cutting job, it would not be necessary for the person helping you to know how to sew. Study the directions carefully so that you can give clear explanations of what you need and why, and to answer questions from the person who has agreed to do the work for you.

MAKING AND MARKING THE PATTERNS

Making patterns involves measuring, cutting, and accuracy. The tissue pattern is quite fragile and you will be needing a stiff cutting edge, so transfer your patterns to a more durable material. You can use a pattern cut from muslin and bound with bias tape. The muslin is durable and lasts for years through many washings. The tape provides a stiff cutting edge for beginners.

Heavy wrapping paper is also used for making patterns. However, a beginner who has difficulty cutting may cut away some of the pattern and thereby change the cutting line. Therefore, masking or heavy tape can

be used to reinforce the edge of pattern pieces. Tracing wheel lines or holes cut can indicate darts, grain lines, etc. This method is both practical and economical. Heavy wrapping paper is used for changing pattern necklines, for yokes, for making other adjustments in a pattern. The edges of the heavy paper can be zigzagged for firmness.

Heavy-weight pellon, an interfacing material, makes a very good pattern to work with. It has a good, stiff, cutting edge and will not need binding, and it is firm enough to allow pattern markings to show up clearly. Yarn, zigzag stitching, and holes cut into the pellon for marking darts

readily to this material, which is pressed, not woven.

A basic pattern of pellon is available from McCall's Pattern Company.

PATTERN MARKINGS

When your pattern pieces have been cut for you, use the following methods of marking them to correspond to the printed pattern:

1. Notches can be marked with staples or with triangles of buckram.

Notches can be cut in or out. If you cut them in, be careful not to cut too deep so that you interfere with the stitching line.

Cutting notches out into points is a safer method, but care should be

taken so that the points of fabric do not throw off the seam guide. Notches are an important device in aiding you to line up your pattern pieces by matching the notches. Once you have joined the pieces with pins or basting, you may cut off the notches if you think they will interfere with straight-line stitching.

2. The straight of the grain of the material may be marked with a piece of bias tape sewn into place, or with yarn, or with masking tape, or by running several rows of stitches back and forth on the sewing machine to make a line you can easily distinguish. The

straight of the grain is used in laying out pattern pieces with the straight of the grain line parallel to the selvage edge. This ensures a better appearance of your garment.

3. Darts can be marked with three small holes -- one at the point, and two at the flared end of the dart. They can be marked, also, by zigzag or heavy stitching lines, or with masking tape, following the lines on the printed pattern.
4. The fold of the material can be marked with a small safety pin set into the edge of the pattern piece.

5. The armhole depth of extended shoulder patterns can have a small safety pin at the underarm seam.
6. Center front and center back of neckline facings have a small safety pin set in the edge of the material.
7. Mark pockets, buttonholes, zipper endings, etc., with staples, or safety pins, or knots of thread.
8. The names of pattern pieces are written in Braille or large letters so that you can read them, on cards or heavy paper and stapled to the pattern pieces. On these labels indicate the construction details such as "cut one", "cut two", "cut on fold",

"ease between notches", and other important ones. Indicate places where easing is to be done.

In marking a pattern you will find the method that suits you. We have presented some alternatives. In seeking help with marking pattern pieces, be sure you know what will be helpful to you. Indicate to the person helping you what your needs are and the importance of accuracy. It will make all the difference in how your garment turns out. Before cutting, make sure your material is marked with a safety pin to indicate the right side of the material. Mark each pattern piece with a safety pin to show you the right side, because in working

with the pieces, you are apt to get mixed up. On some fabrics it is easy to tell the right and wrong sides, but on many, such as cottons, it is impossible to tell the difference.

DIRECTIONS FOR MAKING THE BASIC PATTERN OF MUSLIN

Take measurements: Bust, waist, hips (seven inches below the waist-line), and skirt back length.

Use commercial pattern that comes nearest to the measurements of person who is to use the pattern. Alter the commercial pattern to fit the person. Adjust pattern hem length and dart positions before cutting out basic pattern.

If you use muslin it should be pre-shrunk and pressed. Small patterns require about 5-1/2 yards of material while large sizes require about 7-1/2 yards of muslin. Lay your muslin on the table and smooth it out. Now fold the selvaged edge in 2-1/2 inches wide. With pencil, mark a line in 5/8 of an inch from the folded edge. The marked line in from the folded edge is to be used as a center front line. Place the other selvaged edge against the marked line and smooth. Place the center front of pattern for single piece bodice on the unfolded selva ge edge and cut the two pieces at once. (This gives the front on fold and the open bodice at the same

time.) Repeat the process for the back bodice pieces.

Set your machine on the long stitches. Machine baste a garment of these muslin pieces using a front on fold with an open front, and a back on fold with a back opening. Leave either the front or back open in order to try it on for size. Use long sleeve on one arm, short on the other. Use a variety of skirt patterns also, such as A-line and straight-line.

After the fit is perfect, rip the basting stitches out and bind the pieces with bias tape. Do not try to turn the corners with bias tape. A more perfect corner is made by simply cutting the tape and starting binding

in the opposite direction. After all the pieces are bound, mark your pattern pieces.

SHOPPING FOR MATERIALS

If you are about to construct your first garment, you may find the following hints helpful:

Cottons have a firm body and are relatively easy to handle. It is wise to plan to work with cottons until you handle your machine with ease. Examples of material with firm body are: gingham, percale, and chambray.

A material with a small print of all-over design is less likely to show soil and will be helpful to the beginner who may have to rip a great deal.

Small checks or polkadots are very good. Plaids and some large prints will require matching, and these are to be avoided.

When purchasing fabric buy $1/2$ or $3/4$ extra yardage to allow for cutting one way.

It is good to buy all of your notions for a garment when you purchase your material, and be sure to buy matching thread.

If you use a drier in your laundry, you may want to wash the material in warm water, dry it, and press it out, so that it will be preshrunk.

It is wise to make several garments out of cotton material before going on to other types of fabrics.

A fabric of regular cotton is easy to sew, comparatively inexpensive, and can be washed and dried; but it has a tendency to wrinkle easily. To avoid wrinkling, you may choose a cotton fabric with a wrinkle-resistant resin, or wash-and-wear finish, which may cost more than regular cotton, but is easier to take care of when the garment is completed. There are many fabrics on the market--each with its own idiosyncrasies. As you become more experienced in handling fabrics, you will want to experiment with varieties. The clerk in the store where you buy your materials can, if she chooses, give you valuable suggestions. Whenever possible, it would

do you well to become acquainted with a fabric shop so that you can ask questions and examine different kinds of materials, and find out what is new on the market. With the increased interest in sewing, with simplified methods of sewing, and the new materials coming on the market, there is much information that you could gather and materials that you could adapt to your own use. With a basic understanding of what sewing is all about, you will find many people ready to share ideas with you and discuss your particular sewing problems.

HV1658 Brown, Adele.
 B812 SO WHAT ABOUT SEWING.
 VOLUME I. (197?)

c. 2

Date Due

[illegible]

AMERICAN FOUNDATION FOR THE BLIND
15 WEST 16th STREET
NEW YORK, N. Y. 10011

